

NARRATIVE

OF THE

BARBAROUS and BLOODY

MURDER

OF

P. Hifferman

P-L H-FF-N, M. D.

Committed by himself, on Monday the
17th Day of October Inst. Being
a LETTER from Mr. R—d
D—ck—n of S—l—r-C—t Castle-
Street, Dublin, to J—n B—ne Esq;
at the Hague.

author of the Inner & may other



1748.

A FAITHFUL
NARRATIVE, &c.

DEAR SIR, *Dublin, Oct. 18, 1748.*

BEing sensible that, notwithstanding your unhappy Absence from this City, (where I, among many others of your Friends, greatly regret your Loss) you cannot but have a real Concern in every thing that touches the Welfare of *our Community*; I determined to give you immediate Notice of a very heavy and affecting Stroke, we have suffered in the Loss of our worthy Friend Dr. *H—ff—n*. As this is a matter of the last Moment to us, I will give you the most circumstantial Account I am able of that melancholy Event; and which I am the better enabled to do: First, as I attended him myself in his last Illness, and secondly from my Intimacy with Father *Connor O Shaghnessy*, his spiritual Director, who kindly assisted me in the following Narrative.

On *Monday* the 17th Instant, I was busy in preparing some *Medicines for the Poor gratis*, (as usual,) in fitting up a new Shelf, near four Feet long, the whole extent of my Ware-house, and *revising and correcting* a Scene or two of * *Samson Agonistes*; when I was sent for to the Assistance of this unfortunate Gentleman, by his Female Relation, who has for some time *managed his Affairs*: I immediately drest myself, and when I came to his Lodging, which (as being a little asthmatic) he chuses to have four Story high,

* A Tragedy of *Milton's* altered and amended by the Author of the *Sick-Man's Man*

high, I overheard the Voices of two or three of our Town Doctors, whom the Ignorance of a Servant Maid had called together on the first Alarm; I found they were in Consultation on my Friend, and heard one of them repeat the Words, *little, impudent, cheating Rascal*, from whence I readily concluded they had heard of my being sent for, and were then talking of me. I thereupon burst open the Door, and found our unhappy Friend sitting on the Close-Stool, with a frantic, distressful Aspect; his Relation mentioned above, held one Hand, which to keep warm she put under her Cloaths, (*for there was no other Fire in the Chamber*) and Mr. G—l—d his Printer held the other. As soon as he saw me, he broke out in this Manner, ‘Behold the Man who can restore Health! the *Apollo*, the Poet and Physician equally! whose matchless Verse and Medicines have Power alike to compose the Senses to a State of sweet Tranquillity. O never let it be said that *Proflity* could conquer such a Genius; let the *Inditements*, the *Goose*, and the *Church-Wardens*, be forgotten!’ So far I perceived him rational; but casting a furious Eye (and you know, Sir, our Friend had always something very *violent* in his Looks, from whence at School he was dignified with the Apellation of *Gallows Paul*) casting, I say, a furious Look on the Physicians, he cried out, ‘Avaunt, ye Curs! ye vile Blood-suckers, is all your joint Skill equal to the thousandth Part of what my Friend here *promises* to do? Away, I say’. Upon this he arose from the Close-stool, drew his Hand from the Lady’s cherishing Situation, and rubbed it across the *Quaker Doctor’s* Mouth, obliging the rest to retire with Precipitation.

mon Enemy *Lucas*, repeated the Words *blind*,
lame, &c. with unusual Vehemence, and swore
 that *Mill Cushion* the Fool was a greater Genius
 for the Stage than *Sheridan*, and that Alder-
 man C——ke was more a Hero than *Epaminon-*
das, or the Bishop of *Marseilles*. ‘ I see (says
 ‘ he) the *Tickler* triumphing over the Dunces
 ‘ his Enemies ! that great Soul, who sat
 ‘ three whole Hours, to *confront* any that
 ‘ dare oppose him, in *Lucas’s* Coffee-House!
 ‘ Medals shall be struck, Statues erected, and
 ‘ Signs hung up in honour of *his* name, who
 ‘ blest the World with *Reflections on the Struc-*
 ‘ *ture and Passions of Man* ; that name shall
 ‘ Children lisp—before they can speak ; that
 ‘ name shall’ ——— here he paused, and of a
 sudden observing Mr. G——d’s Eyes to be
 somewhat red, as they usually are from a gal-
 ling humour that affects them, he ran to the
 Close-stool, snatched up a *Tickler* with which
 he had just before cleaned his backside, and
 applied it with the *natural Salve* to the poor
 Printer’s Eyes. On my interposing he caught
 my Arm, ‘ Stop my Friend, said he, this Paper
 ‘ has more virtue in it, than all the Inventions
 ‘ of your great Patron, my honoured friend Dr.
 ‘ *John Taylor*, Occulist to his Majesty, Fellow
 ‘ of several Colleges of Physicians, &c. &c. &c.
 ‘ It’s first intent was to open the Eyes of a
 ‘ deluded People, to shew them (contrary to
 ‘ the universal Voice of all those they esteemed
 ‘ falsely Men of taste and penetration) that
 ‘ the Manager is the worst of bad Players
 ‘ that his Attempts to restore Decency and Re-
 ‘ gularity to the Stage are Impudence and In-
 ‘ solence ; that his great expence to entertain
 ‘ the Town with small profit is Knavery and
 ‘ Imposition : that *Lucas* is a Fool, a Madman

' a Rogue; that his love of Truth and Liber-
 ' ty is all affected, and that there are no truly
 ' loyal Subjects to the King, but such as are
 ' of the Roman Catholic Faith.' All the while
 he spoke this, he kept the Paper close to Mr.
 G——d's Face, who suffered this outrage with
 the greatest Patience, and when it was remov-
 ed, wiped off what remained of the *fetid Mat-*
ter, with the Lady's Apron, and then prudently
 retired. By this time his Spirits began to sink,
 and I had an opportunity of enquiring into the
 nature of his Case, when I was informed that
 the D——r having last Week received a very
 considerable Sum, to the amount of a Guinea
 and upwards, from his great Patron, Sir S——l
 C——ke, as also a Kilderkin of small Beer, (of
 his own making) and three Bushels of Coals,
 for the Winter Season now approaching; having
 I say, received this great and unexpected sup-
 ply, (proportionable to the opulence, spirit and
 bounty, of that *wonderful* great Man) last Friday
 morning; and by the Canons of his Order (for
 there lives not a stricter Son of our holy Mo-
 ther Church) being denied the privilege of
 eating meat, he bespoke a very large quantity
 of *Callicannon*, a Viand he was always remark-
 ably fond of, and thereof eat so immoderately
 that he had lost his Senses from that time for-
 ward. *Repletion* was a disorder I knew he was
 not wont to be subject to; but as it might af-
 fect a slight Venereal Infection, for which the
 week before I had *prescribed him a clean Woman*,
 I thought proper to order him some of my great
Antipleonastic Electuary, which would increase
 his motions to Stool, as was very necessary,
 having been for the last *Fortnight* so costive, that
 it was observable he *squeezed out* with great

plainly evinced he was not *right* at the *Bottom*.
 He grew upon this a little composed and talk-
 ed very rationally; enquiring of the News,
 whether the last promised Indulgencies were
 come over, what the learned World said of his
 metaphysical Work, and if the Huckster-woman
 had sent in her Bill for Oatmeal and Butter-
 milk the last Quarter: Being satisfied in
 these Points, and some Precautions he had given
 in Relation to some troublesome Creditors,
 particularly *Scrog-nose-Moll*, who mends Stock-
 ings at the Corner, and had repaired his, he
 began to be thoughtful, and desired Father O
Shaghnessy to be sent for, which was immedi-
 ately done: As soon as the good Man arrived,
 thinking (I suppose) that he was not in immi-
 nent Danger, he endeavoured to divert him
 from any thoughts of Heaven, and proposed
 taking a Pot of Ale; at the same time observ-
 ing (in the high *Roscommon* dialect) *that the*
Ladies delightful Confabulation would greatly ex-
alt their Felicity. But my Friend, intreating
 him to think of something more serious, began
 to make the following *Confession*: ‘ I am first to
 ‘ beg Pardon of Heaven for my manifold Dissi-
 ‘ mulations, having for some time pass’d for a
 ‘ Physician, whereas I am in fact a Priest, in
 ‘ holy Orders like yourself: This fraud I fear
 ‘ has tended greatly to the prejudice both of
 ‘ the Souls and Bodies of many honest People.
 ‘ Next I implore forgiveness from Mr. *Sheridan*,
 ‘ and Confess that my only motive for abusing
 ‘ him as I have done, was his rejecting a vile
 ‘ performance of mine, and refusing to make
 ‘ me free of the House as a Writer, a Character
 ‘ I have always asserted with the utmost Impu-
 ‘ dence and Petulance; and I further sincerely

merit, contrary to my own *Conscience*, even
 while I had *one*. My next Article is, to ac-
 knowledge and beg Pardon for, having scan-
 dalously aspersed Mr. *Lucas's* Character, fre-
 quently without *Rhime*, but always without
Reason: his being a violent Protestant I hope
 will entitle me to Absolution on this account;
 and my Poverty, which was best relieved by
 so popular a Subject, as also it's being neces-
 sary for me to pay my Court to some *fourteen*
head of Aldermen, must be my excuse else-
 where. 'Tis also with the greatest concern I
 acknowledge my having debased the Writings
 of some of our best *English* Authors, to my
 vile purposes, by forced Parodies, false Con-
 structions, and unfair Quotations: a Crime
 worse than if I had pasted them up in Bog-
 houses, Cobler's Stalls, common Brothels, or
Sub-Sheriff's Offices. Lastly I am to own and
 entreat forgiveness from the Public for being
 so long a nuisance to them; for my imperti-
 nence and vanity in declaring myself Author
 of a Book, to which I prefixed new Title pages
 to make it pass for a second Edition, and re-
 ferred in one of my *Tickler's* to it for an ac-
 count of my Principles, thereby at the same
 time owning myself Author of that Paper, for
 which I every Day deserved a kicking, tho'
 by the great mercy of Heaven I hitherto have
 come off untouch'd: but if I recover, I promise
 never to Publish another, lest I incurr condign
 Punishment, being now too well known (tho'
 still contemptible enough) to escape any longer.
 While he spoke thus, I was out of the way,
 upon my necessary avocations; but when I re-
 turned I found my Patient much worse, and was
 informed by Father *O Shagbnessy* of what I have
 fully related above: as also that just as

he left off Speaking, his Friend and ours, the worthy and upright Mr. *H—y C—n*, Attorney, and late *S—S—f*, came in, to pay him a Visit. This Gentleman being a little unhappy in the Turn of his Countenance, his Arrival occasioned a Relapse in the Doctor, who cried out that he (*Mr. C—*) was the Devil, that he saw Hell in his Face, and that he was come to torment him. He now was quite delirious, and seizing the Close Stool, he emptied part of it on Mr. *C—n*'s Head, and clapping the remainder to his Mouth incontinently swallowed the Contents. This added to his former Complaints, threw him into the deplorable Condition he was in, when I returned: I immediately gave him a large Draught of my grand, infallible, restorative Elixir of Life, upon which he fell into Convulsions, and expired in less than a Quarter of an Hour.

This, Sir, is the narrative I promised you, and which I also determined to print for the general Benefit of his sorrowful Friends, both here and among the greatest Judges of Writing in England and France.

I shall from Time to Time give you further Accounts of any thing that happens here worthy your Knowledge, and particularly what Progress the Alderman's (which you know is our Party) make against their Enemies *Latouche* and *Lucas*; who tho' not of a Side, are equally hated, and for good Reasons by us.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Your assured Friend,

R — — — D — —